THE ISLAND OF ATLANTIS.

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OF THE

TRAVELS AND WONDERFUL ADVENTURES

OF

LORD ARTHUR A . . . . . Y,

OF PHANTOM CASTLE, BEN NEVIS.

1871.

THE ISLAND OF ATLANTIS.

CHAPTER I.

SORRENTO—THE MIRAGE—THE VISION—RETURN TO ENGLAND—THE TOMBS OF THE POMPEYS—A MYSTERIOUS ACQUAINTANCE—RETURN TO MADRID.

THE November of the year 1844 I spent at Sorrento, making excursions to the blue cave in the island of Capri, to Amalfi, Salerno, Pæstum, Castello Mare, and Pompeii, wandering alone over Vesuvius and Somma.

My favourite walk was along the summit of the ridge of mountains, on the north of which is the bay of Naples, on the south that of Salerno. This ridge of mountain resembles in appearance and form a hog's back. The mountain sides shelve down towards the sea on each side, so that as you walk along you have a view of both bays.

What a lovely view it is! With what delight you inhale the dry bracing air! With what elastic step you move as if you trod on clouds! Your spirit feels as if it scorned the mortal coil that chained it to the earth, and longed to be set free, to soar up on high. It was a lovely morning the day before I left Sorrento, on my way to Sicily. I spent the whole day on the mountain top, paying

a last farewell to the heavenly prospect I might never see again. At three o'clock in the afternoon, when beginning to descend the mountain, on my return to Sorrento, white clouds appeared in the horizon. The wind began to blow from the south. At first it was the sigh of the gentle zephyr, sweet as the kiss from the lips of a lovely young girl; then it changed to the hot feverish blast of the sirocco, while dark clouds from the north swept over the Bay of Naples. They reached Sorrento, and climbed up the mountain. A mass of white clouds, like a snow-capped hill, stood before me, and behold! in the midst of it was a gigantic form! A spirit was my first impression! How my heart beat! From the days of my youth I have always longed to see a spirit, longed in vain. Could it be? O no! Science, you teach us many useful things, but you are a sad destroyer of the marvellous. I raised my hat and bowed. The Phantom repeated the salutation.

The wind blew strong from the south. The clouds descended to the sea, carrying with them the Phantom, decreasing in size as it receded, until it nearly disappeared. Presently, the clouds, impelled by the sea breeze blowing from the north, rolled up the mountain, as before. The Phantom was there again, as vividly as before. The same scene of salutation was repeated, with the same result. A clap of thunder was heard. The Phantom disappeared, and a hail-storm ensued. Arrived at the hotel, drenched to the skin, and tired, from the long day's walk, I bathed, dressed, and lay down on the sofa; awaiting dinner at sunset. Dreamy thoughts floated through my brain; thoughts of the Phantom of the Brocken, and of a similar appearance in the Highlands of Scotland; of the

same phenomenon, presented on a larger scale, to the astonished gaze of the Portuguese fishermen in the Canary islands, when they see an island rise, as it were, from the sea, and float away, till lost to sight below the horizon. They shake their heads and say, "Behold the enchanted isle! Behold the isle of Atlantis! A sure forerunner of some direful disaster."

I stood on the cliff where the peasants were gazing. I saw a glorious sight; an island, oh, how lovely! Palaces that shone like silver in the rays of the sun; orange groves, gardens, with trees loaded with fruits I had never seen before. The Garden of Eden was before me! Down the cliff I rushed like one demented; leaped into a boat that was drawn up on the shore, and steered for the isle of Atlantis.

The breeze blowing off shore carried me rapidly through the water, but no island was to be seen. Hungry and disappointed, I was on the point of relinquishing the attempt, when, to my great delight, the island hove up to view. It floated towards me against the wind, and soon I could see the shore covered with a crowd of people of all ages, dressed in flowing robes, with outstretched arms of welcome.

A palace, that seemed to be built of gold, is seen close to the beach. The outer walls were built of pure silver. The battlements, made of burnished steel, were crowded with old men; yet they were not old men. Their hair was not grey; their beards, which came down to their waists, were as black as a raven's bill; their figures were strong and athletic; their faces shewed no signs of wrinkles; yet still, one could not get over the impression, that they were old men.

While I was wondering at this extraordinary phenomenon, the palace gates opened, and out poured a crowd of people, of all ages; bearing fruits, viands, wine, and every luxury that could be imagined. From a postern gate issued a crowd of minstrels, playing on antique instruments, and singing the joyful air of welcome. "Welcome, O stranger. Thrice happy art thou to reach the island of the immortals, where there is neither death nor disease. Herein enter no evil passions or designs; but love, sweet and angelic, reigns supreme!"

I leaped on shore, and rushed forward to meet the approaching crowd, when a voice in my ear said. "' in tavola, Signore."

The island vanished. The boat sank beneath my feet.

My enchanted island was gone; and before me stood the waiter announcing dinner.

"The Atlantis was a vast island, supposed, by the ancient Greeks and Romans, to have been situated in the western ocean, beyond the Pillars of Hercules. It was first mentioned by Plato; who asserted, that he obtained his information from the Priests of Egypt. He gives a beautiful picture of the interior of this imaginary land, and enriches it with a fabulous history."

"Nine thousand years before his time the island suddenly sunk in the sea."

"It took its name from Atlas, Neptune's eldest son, who succeeded his father in the government of it."

"It was supposed to have extended from the Azores to the Canary Islands. These islands being the remains thereof, not swallowed up by the sea."

"Homer, Horace, and other poets, make mention of

two Atlantises, calling them the Hesperides, and representing them to be, the Elysian fields, the habitation of the blest."

This fabulous history may have derived its origin from an ancient tradition of an island in the Mediterranean, inhabited by the children of Noah, (Noah, in Heathen mythology, was Neptune, the trident represented his three sons), which was swallowed up by the waters of the Atlantic bursting a passage through the Straits of Gibraltar.

"Those who have read the history of the Canaries," writes Washington Irving, "may remember the wonders told of this enigmatical island. Occasionally it would be visible from their shores, stretching away in the clear bright west, to all appearance substantial like themselves, and still more beautiful. Expeditions would launch forth from the Canaries to explore this land of promise. For a time its sun-gilt peaks and long shadowy promontories would remain distinctly visible; but in proportion as the voyagers approached, peak and promontory would gradually fade away, until nothing would remain but blue sky above and deep blue water below.

"Hence this mysterious isle was stigmatised by ancient cosmographers with the name of Aprositus, or the Inaccessible."

The natives of the Canaries relate of this island, which they name after S. Brandan, the following tale. "In the early part of the fifteenth century there arrived in Lisbon an old bewildered pilot of the seas, who had been driven by the tempests he knew not whither, and raved about an island in the far deep, upon which he had landed, and which he had found peopled with Christians, and adorned with

noble cities. The inhabitants told him they were descendants of a band of Christians who fled from Spain, when that country was conquered by the Moslems. They were curious about the state of their Fatherland, and grieved to hear that the Moslem still held possession of the kingdom of Granada. The old man, on his return to his ship, was caught by a tempest, whirled out once more to sea, and saw no more of the unknown island. This strange story caused no little excitement in Portugal and Spain. Those well versed in history remembered to have read that in the time of the Conquest of Spain, in the eighth century, seven Bishops, at the head of seven bands of exiles, had fled across the great ocean to some distant shores, where they might found seven Christian cities, and enjoy their faith unmolested. The fate of these wanderers had hitherto remained a mystery, and their story faded from memory; but the report of the old pilot revived the long-forgotten theme, and it was determined, by the pious and the enthusiastic, that this island thus accidentally discovered was the identical place of refuge, whither the wandering Bishops had been guided with their flock by the hand of Providence. No one, however, entered into the matter with half the zeal of Don Fernando de Alma, a young Cavalier of high standing in the Portuguese Court.

The island of the Seven Cities became now the constant subject of his thoughts by day, and of his dreams by night; and he determined to fit out an expedition, and set sail in quest of the sainted island. Don Joacos II. furnished him with a commission, constituting him Adalantado, or Governor, of any country he might discover, with the single proviso, that he should bear all the expenses of the discovery, and pay a tenth of the profits to the Crown.

With two vessels he put to sea and steered for the Canaries—in those days the regions of nautical discovery and romance, and the outposts of the known world; for as yet Columbus had not crossed the ocean. Scarce had they reached those latitudes, than they were separated by a violent tempest. For many days the caravel of Don Fernando was driven about at the mercy of the elements, and the crew were in dispair. All at once the storm subsided, the ocean sunk into a calm, the clouds which had veiled the face of heaven were suddenly withdrawn, and the tempest-tossed mariners beheld a fair and mountainous island, emerging, as if by enchantment, from the murky gloom. The caravel now lay perfectly becalmed off the mouth of a river, on the banks of which, about a league off, was descried a noble city, with lofty walls and towers, and a protecting castle. After a time, a stately barge with sixteen oars was seen emerging from the river and approaching the vessel. Under a silken canopy in the stern sat a richly clad Cavalier, and over his head was a banner bearing the sacred emblem of the Cross. When the barge reached the caravel, the Cavalier stepped on board, and in the old Castilian language welcomed the strangers to the Island of the Seven Cities. Don Fernando could scarce believe that this was not all a dream. He made known his name and the object of his voyage.

The Grand Chamberlain—such was the title of the Cavalier from the island—assured him that, as soon as his credentials were presented, he would be acknowledged as the Adalantado of the Seven Cities. In the meantime, the day was waning; the barge was ready to convey him to land, and would assuredly bring him back. Don Fernando

leaped into it after the Grand Chamberlain, and was rowed ashore. Everything there bore the stamp of former ages, as if the world had suddenly rolled back for several centuries; and no wonder, for the island of the Seven Cities had been cut off from the rest of the world for several hundred years.

On shore Don Fernando spent an agreeable evening at the Court House, and late at night with reluctance he re-entered the barge, to return to the vessel. The barge sallied out to sea, but no caravel was to be seen. The oarsmen rowed on—their monotonous chant had a lulling effect. A drowsy influence crept over Don Fernando: objects swam before his eyes, and he lost consciousness. On his recovery, he found himself in a strange cabin, surrounded by strangers. Where was he? On board a Portuguese ship, bound for Lisbon. How had he come there? He had been taken senseless from a wreck drifting about the ocean. The vessel arrived in the Tagus, and anchored before the famous capital. Don Fernando sprang joyfully on shore, and hastened to his ancestral mansion. A strange porter opened the door, who knew nothing of him or of his family; no people of the name had inhabited the house for many a year. He sought the house of his betrothed, the Donna Serafina. He beheld her on the balcony; then he raised his arms towards her with an exclamation of rapture. She cast upon him a look of indignation, and hastily retired. He rang at the door; as it was opened by the porter, he rushed past, sought the well known chamber, and threw himself at the feet of Serafina. She started back with affright, and took refuge in the arms of a youthful Cavalier.

"What mean you, Señor?" cried the latter.

"What right have you to ask that question?" demanded Don Fernando fiercely.

"The right of an affianced suitor!"

"O Serafina! is this your fidelity?" cried he, in a tone of agony.

"Serafina! what mean you by Serafina, Señor? This lady's name is Maria."

"What!" cried Don Fernando; "is not this Serafina Alvarez, the original of yon portrait which smiles on me from the wall?"

"Holy Virgin!" cried the young lady, casting her eyes upon the portrait, "he is talking of my great-grandmother!"

Amongst the new works of travels, published in the year 1849, was one, of which all the Reviews spoke in the highest praise. "The Cities and Wilds of Andalusia, by the Hon. R. Dundas Murray."

In giving an account of the Tombs of the Pompeys near Baena, Mr. Murray mentions the discovery by the workmen of a lamp which was broken accidentally.

"The discovery, however, which attracted considerable attention at the time, was that of a sepulchral vault containing the ashes of a family who bore the illustrious name of Pompey.

"In the year 1833, some labourers connected with the farm, pierced through an arch of stone, which on investigation was found to be the roof of a subterranean chamber, some ten feet long by seven broad. On descending into it, they found on either side, about a foot and a half from the ground, a stone shelf upon which rested fourteen cinerary

urns, mingled with lachrymata vials, and bowls, one of which was of very elegant design and workmanship. In one corner stood a leaden jar of peculiar form, resembling in shape and size a beehive inverted, which served as a case for a lamp; and, improbable as it sounds, the men united in affirming that from this a light was streaming on their first effecting an aperture in the roof, but was extinguished, either by the admission of the external air, or by the falling of some rubbish upon the spot, by which the lamp was broken and its contents spilt. Be this as it may, the remains of some glutinous liquid adhered to the fragments of the lamp, and were undoubtedly the residuum of the oil or other substance by which it was fed."

The "Spectator," (No. 379), gives an account of an ever-burning lamp found in a tomb in Vicenza; supposed to be that of Rosicrucius; more probably that of Trismosinus.

Isaachus, the Dutch adept, gives "three receipts for making ever-burning lights, cap. 153, lib. 2. Oper. Min. pag. 528, vol. 3. Th. Chym., cap. 44. Oper. M[illegible] pag. 458, vol. 3. Th. Chym., cap. 72, 1. Oper. Min. pag. 354. vol. 3. Th. Chym."

"One of these shining liquids he reduced to a red crystalline stone which would give light by night, so as that his friends might see to eat and drink by it."

Trismosinus, "in libro Gangiveveron, gives the receipt for making an oyl of vitriol which shines by night."

These oyls are compounds of phosphorus, which become luminous when heated over a lamp.

The Rosicrucians were a Society of Alchemists, of whom mention is first made in the fourteenth century. The name Rosicrucian was derived from Ros (May Dew), a solvent

for gold, and crux a cross, the emblem of light: for, on looking at a cross, you read the Latin word LVX.

They did not pretend to have discovered anything themselves, but only to have collected the knowledge which had been handed down from remote antiquity.

The letters R.C. were the initials of Rudimenta Creationis, by which they understood the essences, first principles or primitive forms of things. For instance: the seeds of plants contain the forms which are represented by the plants when full grown. When the seed is sown in the ground, it decays. A process analogous to fermentation takes place; the essence of the seed attracts to itself the particles of matter within its reach, to produce its own form. When the plant is full grown, its own form is developed.

In like manner in man. The essence of a man is his spirit, (not his soul,) which has a definite form, slightly differing in every man born into the world. This is the living principle, which has power to clothe itself with external matter under favourable circumstances; the external development, exhibiting the internal form, or ghost, of the man.

This theory has one merit, that it affords an intelligible explanation of the resurrection, where every man rises with his own body; for the particles of matter, which enter into the composition of the bodies of all men, are the same.

The principle by which dead matter has a tendency to produce its own form, as in crystals, is called electricity; that by which living forms are produced is called "The Æther of Life."

Feeling anxious to obtain for analysis a small portion of the glutinous matter adhering to the fragments of the lamp,

and fearing lest some enthusiastic chemist might forestal me, I startèd at once for Andalusia, *via* Paris, Madrid, and Cordova.

At Cordova I hired mules for Granada. On arriving at the tombs of the Pompeys I was greatly disappointed to find nobody there, the works having been discontinued; so that all my trouble, and the expense of my journey, went for nothing.

From Granada I proceeded to Malaga; from Malaga by sea to Cadiz. At Cadiz I went on board the Guadalquiver steamer bound for Seville. We had a great crowd of passengers on board, people from all parts of the world—French, Germans, Portuguese, Arabs from Tetuan, but none of my own countrymen.

I was sitting close to the steersman, smoking a cigar, when a Spanish gentleman addressed me in English:—

"It appears to me strange that you should be the only Englishman on board; your countrymen are seen everywhere."

"It is very strange!" I replied; "but if I may judge from your accent you must have been born in England."

"I am of Spanish origin, a native of Cordova. My name is Don Manuel di Ribiera. My family has lived for centuries in Cordova."

"In that case I must compliment you on your knowledge of English; for if you had told me that you were an Englishman I should never have doubted the truth of the assertion."

"You need not be surprised, for my mother was an Englishwoman. She was a Protestant, and I have been brought up in the same persuasion."

Don Manuel di Ribiera was a man of middle stature, light built, and active, with very small hands and feet, an aquiline nose, piercing black eyes, high forehead, and a large protuberance where phrenologists place the organ of ideality. His jet black hair fell in curls over his shoulders; his voice was soft and melodious; a smile played on his lips of a serio-comico character impossible to describe.

After talking for some time on commonplace subjects, the conversation turned upon Egypt, its history, monuments, and tombs.

"By the bye, (says I,) talking of the tombs of Egypt, have you heard of the excavations lately begun at Baena?"

"You allude probably to the tombs of the Pompeys. I read an account of them in the 'Gaceta di Madrid,' which mentioned that they had been visited by the Honourable R. Dundas Murray. You have been to lionize them, perhaps?"

"I have, and I have been sadly disappointed at finding that the works had been discontinued. I wished to obtain for analysis a small portion of the glutinous matter found in the antique lamp."

"You believe, then, in the dreams of the alchemists?"

"I supposed that it was one of the ever-burning lamps, of which mention is made in the 'Spectator.'"

"That was the impression on my mind, (said he,) on reading the account given by your countryman; you cannot surely believe that a light could burn for ever?"

"That is not what I mean," I replied, "there is no reason to suppose that the lamp had been burning since the days of the Pompeys. My idea is that when the lamp was broken by the stones falling upon it, the admission of

air to the glutinous compound caused it to burst into flame."

"That is precisely what occurred to me on reading the account in the 'Gazette.' If you are interested on the subject of alchemy you will find a great number of MSS. in the library of the Escurial. They are curious as ancient productions, but of course no man of common sense, at the present day, believes in such trash. I should advise you, however, to read the MSS. Suppose we take a turn up and down the deck?"

There was a German band on deck. Don Manuel di Ribiera began to converse freely with the Germans. They appeared surprised and puzzled. At length one of them said:—

"I beg your pardon, sir, for asking you the question: We are all Saxons, and we are curious to know from what part of Saxony you come?"

"I am a Spaniard," replied Don Manuel di Ribiera, turning on his heel.

We met a group of Arabs from Tetuan. They were quarrelling over a game of cards. One of them drew a knife. Quick as thought, Don Manuel di Ribiera seized him by the arm, and said a few words in Arabic in a gentle voice. The man put up his knife and sat down. Don Manuel di Ribiera entered into conversation with the Arabs.

"How did you pacify that savage?" I said, greatly astonished at this extraordinary scene.

"They think that I am a Marabout, and that I am a native of Tetuan."

A French General and his wife were walking on deck. The lady was very infirm. Her foot trod on an orange

peel; she fell, but before she reached the ground she was caught in the arms of Don Manuel di Ribiera. The General was profuse in his thanks for Don Manuel di Ribiera's politeness. They commenced an animated conversation, which ended in the General asking him for his address in Paris, for no doubt he was a Parisian. Being told that he was a Spaniard, he looked disappointed and incredulous.

On arriving at Seville, I bid Don Manuel di Ribiera good bye, as I was going to the diligence, which was on the point of starting for Madrid.

"We shall meet soon again," said Don Manuel di Ribiera.

Having the coupé all to myself, I stretched myself at full length to enjoy a nap. The scene on board the steam-packet, the mysterious stranger, the conversation on board produced a dreamy state of thought. I have seen his face before, I thought; no doubt I have, but where, I cannot imagine. While trying to recollect, I fell asleep. I dreamt that I was at Sorrento; that I had seen the spectre on the mountain; that I was sailing in the little boat towards the isle of Atlantis. The island appears. The same crowd rushes down to the shore to welcome me. In front of them is one bearing a white flag, on which is written in letters of gold, "Welcome! thrice welcome to the isle of the immortals!" I started back in astonishment; for, behold! it was my friend of the Guadalquiver, Don Manuel di Ribiera.

"Aqui si quiede un hora, Señor," (We stop here for an hour, Sir,) sounded harshly in my ears. The vision was gone. "Quiere usted bajar" (Will you alight?) says the conductor. We had arrived at the town where supper was prepared for us.

CHAPTER II.

THE ESCURIAL—THE MSS.—DON MANUEL DI RIBIERA AGAIN—THE ISLAND OF MIRANDA.

ARRIVED at Madrid, I lost no time in going to the Escurial.

The Librarian was extremely polite. Said he would be most happy to show me any MSS. I desired to see; conducted me to the manuscript room, and gave me the catalogue.

The first was an Italian MS. by an anonymous writer.

A very singular MS. it was. It gave receipts for rendering oneself invisible; for obtaining supernatural strength; for producing an appearance of giants; for imitating thunder and lightning; but what interested me most, was a short and very beautiful receipt for making the Elixir Vitæ, and for converting quicksilver into gold and silver.

The next MS. was one written by Raymundus Lullius; to which was annexed an account of his life, by one of his pupils; concluding with a very singular account of his death.

"On hearing of the death of Raymundus Lullius, I left Madrid for Majorca. I obtained access to his tomb, which I opened, expecting to find in it some of the powder of projection. It being the usual practice of the adepts to

bury with them the most valuable things that they possessed, the elixirs for making gold and silver.

"Conceive my astonishment when, on opening the tomb, I found that the body deposited therein was not that of Raymundus Lullius. I made inquiries, but could gain no satisfactory information.

"There had evidently been a mock funeral. He was gone, nobody knew where!"

How strange, I thought, is that fondness of the adepts for solitude! for leaving the world behind them, and burying themselves in the desert!

They say it is one of the effects of the Elixir Vitæ, "Quien Sabe."

Raymundus Lullius was born in the island of Majorca, in the year 1234.

He was said to have passed his early years in dissipation, but to have been reclaimed by the accident of falling in love with a young woman afflicted with a cancer.

This circumstance induced him to apply himself entirely to the study of chemistry and medicine, with a view to discover a cure for her complaint, in which he succeeded.

He afterwards entered into the community of Franciscan Friars.

Edward the First invited him to England; and it is affirmed that he made roubles of the rose, to the value of six million pounds sterling, to enable Edward the First to carry on the war against the Turks.

He was seized with an invincible desire to convert the Mahomedans to the Christian faith.

He penetrated into Africa and Asia; but succeeded in making few converts, and was with difficulty suffered to

depart, under a solemn injunction that he should not return.

At the age of eighty, when, according to his own account of himself, "his hairs were not grey, nor his eyes dim," he returned to Africa.

The Mahomedans, exasperated by his obstinacy, drove him on board his own vessel, covered with wounds, of which it was supposed he died.

His body was carried back to Majorca, where he was buried.

Miracles are reported to have been worked at his tomb.

Having finished the perusal of the MSS., I was preparing to leave the room, when the door opened, and in walked Don Manuel di Ribiera.

"Buenos Dias tenga usted." I thought I should have found you in the Manuscript room. What do you think of the MSS.? Have you discovered anything interesting in them?"

"The Italian MS. is extremely interesting. It is a pity it is anonymous."

"It was not written by an Italian. It was the work of a Spaniard. The author was my father, Count Juan di Ribiera."

"Indeed!" said I, in the greatest astonishment, "perhaps you have studied the 'Divine Science' yourself? What strange people the Alchemists were! Here is an account of the life of Raymundus Lullius by one of his pupils, who asserts, that he recovered from his wounds and had a mock funeral performed. Perhaps you know what became of him?"

"I saw him last year."

"Where?"

"In the Island of Atlantis."

I leaped off my chair, with astonishment!

"Is the Island of Atlantis then not a phantom?"

"No more a phantom than the chair that you sit on, or the table at which you are writing. We have welcomed you, Lord Arthur, already in a vision; we now welcome you in reality."

"Will you conduct me there?"

"I cannot do so now, for I start within the hour for Damascus: if you desire to go alone, I shall let my friends know of your intention."

"One word before you go. What is the island of Atlantis?"

"Three centuries ago there was a rage for performing alchemical experiments over the whole of Europe, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, India, and even China. It was an epidemic. The number of the adepts was not very numerous in any country; but the number of experiments was overwhelming; while that of the charlatans, who knew nothing on the subject, was very considerable. The latter brought the science into disrepute; and, in process of time, Alchemy became a bye-word of reproach; a term signifying everything that was dishonourable. The Rosicrucians (all the adepts were members of the Rosicrucian Society) determined to emigrate to some uninhabited island, where they could carry on their researches in peace and quiet.

"Flotillas were seen to sail from all parts of the world in a certain direction. The shores of the Mediterranean were covered with vessels of all sizes. They were seen to pass the Straits of Gibraltar, and were never seen to return.

"These flotillas belonged to the Rosicrucians.

"In Spain and Italy large properties were sold and mortgaged by people who were known to be amateurs of Chemical Science.

"Great was the astonishment that this movement produced at the time; but as people imagined that they were all mad, and in as much as they embarked on board vessels without sailors, where they were going to was no difficult problem to solve—to the bottom of the Atlantic.

"Well: they lashed all their vessels together, and thereby formed a floating island.

"They procured timber from the coast of Africa.

"Their island soon began to assume, in process of time, gigantic proportions. They covered it with earth, sowed seeds, built houses and palaces. Their gardens (which, in beauty, excelled everything which could be conceived) covered the whole island, giving to it the appearance of Fairy Land.

"Their wealth being unbounded, they could procure whatever they wanted from all parts of the world. You can judge for yourself when you go there."

"How am I to get there?"

"Go to the island of Miranda, one of the Azores. Purchase a small boat. Ascend every morning before sunrise the hill, from whence tradition says, the island is occasionally seen.

"When you see a small cloud in the horizon, (looking through your telescope S.S.W.), observe whether its figure changes, and whether its motion is inexplicable by currents of air.

"That shall be the signal.

"Steer for it, and before sunset you will be in the island of the Rosicrucians."

I had nearly a month to wait at Lisbon, before I could find a vessel that touched at the island of Miranda.

The day after my arrival, I purchased a small boat with a Latine sail, and went out fishing.

On the following morning, according to appointment, I was at my post on the hill at sunrise.

No cloud was visible on the horizon.

I returned to the hotel—breakfasted.

Had a cold dinner brought down to the boat, with books, fishing tackle, &c., giving the landlord to understand, that I might possibly visit some of the small islands, in which case I should not return for a few days.

For three weeks this was my daily routine of life; until at last I got quite tired of waiting, and began to feel that uncomfortable sensation which a man experiences, who has been made the victim of a practical joke.

It put me into a state of fever, which made me think I had gone mad! That Don Manuel di Ribiera was mad! That the whole world was mad! That I had never been in Spain at all, and that the whole thing was a delusion.

"I shall go to-morrow," says I, "for the last time."

"Where, Sir?" said the waiter, overhearing my soliloquy.

"Out fishing," was the reply.

"I shall return by the vessel that touches at the island three days hence."

Fully resolved to put this plan into execution, I ascended the hill the next morning, for the last time. The sun had no sooner risen above the horizon, when behold a small cloud rises S.S.W. Its form changes, in a very extra-

ordinary manner, and, moreover, the motion is very eccentric.

Mad with excitement, I rushed down to the beach, and pushed the boat off; forgetting, in my hurry, to take the oars on board.

A strong wind blew off shore N.N.E. The boat flew before it, and in three hours, I was far out of sight of land, steering for the cloud.

At midday, the wind dropped. The sail flapped against the mast. A dead calm ensued.

Here was a pleasant situation to be in! Becalmed in the middle of the Atlantic. To die of hunger and thirst, not having even breakfasted!

CHAPTER III.

THE ALBATROSS—AN AERIAL VOYAGE—ARRIVE AT ATLANTIS.

WHAT was to be done?

I looked through the telescope at the cloud. There it was, the same as before, only larger. How far off? It might as well be 1000 miles off. Should the cloud by chance be a balloon there may be somebody in it, who has a better telescope than mine. I'll try the effect of making a signal.

Hauling down the sails, I tyed the ropes into the shape of the letters R. C. Then hauled up this signal, and looked through the telescope, to see the effect.

The cloud began to change its shape; from being somewhat of the form of a pear, it assumed that of a long narrow extinguisher for candles, and suddenly, to my astonishment, it shot up into the air and disappeared.

I shouted and screamed with delight, I felt the sensation of a man who has been reprieved, when on the point of being hanged.

How soon, thought I, shall I see the island coming floating towards me? Perhaps they will send me a boat? Where can the cloud have gone to?

Looking through the telescope, after an interval of

an hour, I saw the cloud straight over head, descending rapidly.

When it came near enough to see it more distinctly, I felt rather alarmed. It is not a balloon, it is a bird. "The Roc," that fabulous bird, mentioned in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments!

It descends. Its gigantic wings give one flap. Round and round about my head, it wheels in concentric circles, and the next moment, close to me, I see a boat, made of india rubber, large enough to hold 20 people. The boat was fitted up with sofas, arm chairs, and every luxury. In the centre was a table, on which covers were laid for three.

A lady of transcendent beauty stood before me; by her side was my friend, Don Manuel di Ribiera.

"Jump in, Lord Arthur, you must be hungry after your long sail, don't stand on ceremony. Sit down there. Here is a glass of iced champagne to refresh you. Welcome on board the Albatross.

"I must apologize for keeping you waiting so long in the island of Miranda; we came as fast as the wind could bring us. Allow me to introduce you to my wife, Donna Elvira."

"It was my fault, Lord Arthur, the wind was not to blame for the delay: it was a woman's curiosity, that impelled me to visit parts of Central Africa, which have never been trod by the foot of any adventurous traveller. You would have been astonished, had you seen the effect of our descent on those unknown regions of the globe; when the Albatross opened his gigantic wings, and soared, round and round, above the heads of the negroes. They

threw themselves on the ground, on their faces, and lay like dead men. As for the wild beasts, their screams of terror were terrific to hear.

"They fled from us, as the cattle in South America fly when the prairies are on fire. Such a stampede was never witnessed before, in either hemisphere.

"Had it not been to gratify me, we should have kept our appointment to the day, for Don Manuel informed me that you were waiting for us, the moment you arrived in the Island of Miranda."

"I fear, I have been the cause of your curtailing your African tour."

"By no means; I was as impatient to arrive at our Island home, as you could have been to gratify your curiosity."

Huge sails, like the arms of a windmill, turned round gently above our heads, producing a delightfully refreshing breeze, which was increased by the flapping of the gigantic wings. We ascended very slowly, above the surface of the sea. The sails ceased to move. The wings folded themselves together, like the wings of a bird. A mass of silk, above our heads, opened, and filled with gas, and we ascended rapidly.

"What do you think, Lord Arthur, of our aerial ship?"

"I don't know what to think of it; I am lost in admiration. I have dreamed, that such things will be achieved by science a century hence; but I had no idea, that aerial navigation had been carried to such perfection at the present day."

"You forget, Lord Arthur, that these are not inventions

of the present day, which we regard as the experiments of children.

"The gas which inflates our balloon, is not hydrogen gas. It is a gas that was known to the Rosicrucians before the time of Solomon. It is very nearly as light as hydrogen gas. What renders it invaluable for aerial excursions, is the property it possesses of being very easily reduced to a fluid state by very slight pressure; and not being influenced by heat or cold, more than hydrogen, otherwise we could not use it for ascending to high altitudes in the air."

"How do you avoid thunderstorms? Is your gas not inflammable, like hydrogen?"

"Quite the reverse; it extinguishes flame. The effect of being struck by lightning, might be an increase of volume, produced by the heat; but as there is an empty bag attached to it, which immediately receives the gas evolved, that danger is avoided."

"Suppose the lightning perforates the silk, and the gas escapes, what becomes of your balloon?"

"Such a case is possible, but has never as yet occurred; for we always avoid thunderstorms. Should it so happen, we set the apparatus at work which raised us in the heavy atmosphere at the surface of the sea; repair damages; make fresh gas, and ascend again as merry as a lark. In this case, you see a solid substance like iodine; a small quantity of which would in a short time inflate the balloon; moreover, that bundle you see at the far end of the boat is a balloon, and by pulling a string, (though strange it may appear to say), we should find ourselves in ten seconds floating in the air, safely descending in a small car. But this is an

extra precaution, intended merely for extraordinary emergencies."

"I feel very faint," says Donna Elvira. "The air is very oppressive."

"A certain indication of a thunderstorm. What says the electrometer, Lord Arthur?"

"The atmosphere is charged with electricity."

"In that case there is no time to be lost," says Don Manuel, pulling a string.

The wings opened, rolled upwards, and the Albatross assumed the form before mentioned of an extinguisher. A frightful explosion followed this manœuvre.

Don Manuel and Donna Elvira went off in a fit of laughter.

"Lord Arthur, you look as pale as a ghost; you thought we were blown up, and so we are, but in a different sense of the word. Just look at the barometer, and see how we have ascended in the last few seconds."

I was astonished! We had shot upwards like a rocket through a dense black cloud, and we were still ascending at a terrific pace.

Presently the sun shone forth, bright above our heads, in a cloudless sky; while below, nothing could be seen but clouds as black as ink, through which played at intervals forked lightning, accompanied with terrific peals of thunder.

"That was a narrow escape we had," said I, drawing a deep sigh.

"I have passed through worse thunderstorms than that in the Albatross," replied Don Manuel, "(for I can make the balloon secure against the electric fluid.) I always however avoid thunderstorms. One of our golden rules is, 'not to tempt providence.'"

"How cold it is," says Donna Elvira, "I can scarcely breathe, the air is so light."

Don Manuel spread a tent-like covering over the boat: then lighted a lamp furnace, to which was attached a tube connected with a vessel filled with condensed air.

The change from an icy cold rarefied atmosphere, to a warm tent filled with air of the same density as below, soon restored the colour to Donna Elvira's cheeks.

"It surprises me, how you can steer your balloon when out of sight of land, with clouds overhead, preventing the possibility of taking an observation!"

Don Manuel burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter.

"One would fancy from your remark that the Albatross was a vessel sailing on the ocean. We steer by attraction, not by electrical or magnetic attraction. To render myself intelligible, I must adopt your phraseology. Fancy an iron boat floating on the sea, and a magnet the size of a mountain in front of it, the boat would go straight to the mountain. It would not require a man at the rudder to steer. When you were on the island of Miranda, you represented the mountain, the Albatross was the iron vessel."

"On what principle do you explain so singular a phenomenon?"

"An æther, infinitely more attenuated than the æther of light, extends throughout space. We call this æther the Æther of Life, for without this æther no living creature could exist in the Universe. Through this medium we converse, at any distance on earth. You seem surprised! Have you never read in the works of the Rosicrucians that they could communicate with each other, at considerable distances?"

"I have, but I thought it was by some process similar to the electric telegraph."

"The mistake that your philosophers make is in supposing that everything can be explained by electricity. If some extraordinary phenomenon presents itself to notice, which cannot be explained by your discovery of the nineteenth century, of which you are so enamoured, you immediately pronounce it to be a delusion, perfectly unworthy of philosophical investigation. But to return from this digression, as soon as you got on board the Albatross, the mountain was my father, Count Juan di Ribiera, who expects the pleasure of our company to dinner at sunset."

"Impossible," says I, "the sun will be below the horizon in half an hour."

"We never can calculate upon accidents," says Don Manuel. "Now that the thunderstorm has passed, and as we are over the island of Atlantis, I shall give the signal."

Taking out of an ivory box a crystal globe, he placed it on a bronze cup, under which a lamp was burning. The globe immediately became luminous.

"Can your father see that signal from below?" says I, in the greatest surprise!

"Of course not. Look at the barometer. We are five miles above the level of the sea."

"Why do you call that light a signal?"

Don Manuel went off in fits of laughter.

"There you are again in your philosophy of the nineteenth century. Look now at the globe. The signal is answered. The globe shows no light. We shall now descend; for we are exactly over the lofty tower of my observatory."

Pulling a string, the enormous silk canvas collapsed in an instant, and we descended by the force of gravitation.

When within a mile of the surface of the sea, or thereabouts, as indicated by the barometer, the gigantic wings expanded, the wind-mill sails revolved. We made a few concentric circles in the air, and lit as light as a bird on the top of the tower.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ISLE OF ATLANTIS—THE HALL OF THE ROSICRUCIANS —THE PANIC—THE SUBMARINE FLEET.

Don Manuel and his wife jumped out of the boat, and threw themselves into the arms of Count Juan di Ribiera.

When their ebullition of feeling had subsided, Don Manuel introduced me to his father.

"Lord Arthur, you are thrice welcome to our Island Home. It was I who appeared to you in a vision, at Sorrento, and afterwards in Spain; you mistook me for my son, and no wonder, we are so like each other, that they call us the twin brothers; the difference between our ages is only eighteen years. Dinner is ready below; let us descend."

The platform, on which we stood, descended by machinery, and we found ourselves in a magnificent saloon, where dinner was prepared for four persons.

There were no servants in attendance: every thing was done by machinery. You had only to touch a spring, and behold! whatever you wanted was handed to you.

"What do you think, Lord Arthur, of our wines?"

"Delicious! I have never tasted such wines before: where do they come from?"

"They are made in the island. We have found by experience, that by sheltering the grapes from the midday sun, and exposing them to the green rays of the spectrum, we can produce wines, to which nothing on earth can be compared."

"I have remarked something of the same kind in Italy," I said; "I never could understand, why the Italians hung their vines in graceful festoons from tree to tree, producing such a picturesque effect. The only answer I could get was 'our fathers and grandfathers did so.' Virgil mentions, that such was the custom in his time. An English Banker at Florence, of the name of Smyth, a partner of Messrs. Maquay and Packenham, bought a vineyard, which produced excellent wine. He sent to Bordeaux for vine-dressers, to trail the grapes on poles, according to the French fashion, expecting by this improvement to produce the best wines in Tuscany. The experiment was a complete failure."

"You now understand, Lord Arthur, the reason. In a southern climate like Italy, the vines require shade. You must feel tired, and I see that Donna Elvira is already in the land of oblivion; so we will bid you good night, and wish you pleasant dreams. As long as you do us the honour to remain here as our guest, the tower is at your disposal. We inhabit another part of the Palace. You shall have to wait upon you a countryman of your own, one of our chief mechanicians, who will explain to you the machinery in the tower. He was born in the island. His father, who lives in the other side of the island, was born in the Highlands of Scotland. Both of them speak Gaelic, as fluently as if they had never left their native hills. His father is a son of the Scotch adept, Philalethe, who died from being put to the torture. His history you are already acquainted with. We breakfast at sunrise, dine at midday and sup at sunset; but we never stand on ceremony, you can please yourself as to hours. To-morrow we will excuse your company at breakfast, as I am sure, that you, and Donna Elvira, will

not be awake before sunrise, after the fatigues of yesterday."

The following morning, when I awoke, the first thing which presented itself to my astonished eyes, was the air filled with enormous birds, flying about in all directions: yet, they were not birds, at least, they had not the shape of birds; they looked more like flying Dragons. I thought it was a dream; until I saw a bird, like the Albatross in miniature, fly past the window. This recalled me to a recollection of where I was. Looking at my watch, I was horrified to see that it was eleven o'clock, one hour before dinner hour.

In the adjoining room, was a swimming bath; 40 feet by 10 feet, and 10 feet deep. Having taken a swim, I put on light loose robes, the costume of the island, which I found lying on a sofa. I drank a cup of chocolate, lit a segar, and lay down on the sofa, waiting till dinner should be announced.

At twelve o'clock a bell rang. That is the dinner bell, I thought: I had no time to think on the subject, for the sofa descended, and was carried at a railway pace, along a dark passage; and before I could recover from my astonishment, I found myself in a magnificent hall, where 5000 people were seated at table.

"Lord Arthur," said Count Juan, taking me by the hand, "allow me to present you to the Rosicrucian brethren, who have been for a long time anxiously expecting your arrival in the island, to enroll you as a member of their fraternity."

The hall was lighted by lamps, which shone with a brilliant light, brighter and more sunlike than that of the

electric or oxyhydrogen. The ever-burning lamps of the Rosicrucians.

The dinner was most sumptuous, and the wines of every imaginable variety. Dinner being concluded, and a few preliminary toasts having been drunk, Count Juan proposed the health of our Noble Guest and Brother.

I had scarcely risen to return thanks, when the door flew open, and a messenger delivered a despatch to Count Juan.

Had a shell fallen amongst them, it could not have produced a greater consternation.

They rushed simultaneously from the hall.

Count Juan pointed to the sofa. I threw myself upon it. It sunk beneath the floor; flew along the subterranean passage, and then ascended to the top of the tower; where I found the Scotchman looking at the skies through a gigantic telescope.

"What," says I, "in the name of all that is marvellous! can be the meaning of all this commotion?"

"A signal from the balloon above: a fleet of steam-vessels is sailing right down upon us."

"Are we going to be attacked?"

"There is no danger of that, Lord Arthur. We could blow all the navy in the world out of the water, before you could say Jack Robinson."

"What, then, is it all about?"

"The machinery, which moves the island, cannot be set agoing in time."

"What do you propose to do?"

"You will see presently. Just have the kindness to look through the telescope, and tell me what you see."

"A cluster of stars. They change colour, and move S.S.W."

"What more?"

"They form a circle, and turn round."

"That means that we must turn the island round, until that hill, that you see yonder, close to the beach, occupies the position of N.N.E."

"What is the object of that manœuvre?"

"We wish to give to the Island the appearance of a coral reef. Look at that hill, how it begins to elongate, and stretch along the shore. Now, you see, it runs out to sea, like coral reefs. We are obliged to employ the whole machinery of the island, to perform this operation rapidly. The hill is made of canvas, the sails of the island. On one side of these gigantic sails is painted a representation of a coral island, which would deceive any except a practised eye. The remainder of the island will be concealed by the canvas, all except the tower we stand upon; which must be enveloped in mist."

"How is that to be done?"

"Upon opening the subterranean chambers, at the bottom of the tower, a vapour will ascend, which will envelope the castle, and be mistaken for a sea mist."

"Suppose they wish to land on the island out of curiosity, there being no coral island laid down in their charts, in these latitudes?"

"That is the principal danger to avoid; to prevent which our navy has put to sea."

"I don't see any vessels."

"Don't you see a long line of narrow chimneys, moving rapidly through the water?"

"I see something like what you mention."

"Look; now they form a semicircle; a mile in front of the coral reefs."

"What is the object of that manœuvre?"

"They represent sunken rocks, upon which, if any vessel strikes, it founders!"

"Shall they not see the chimneys?"

"See. The chimneys are all bending sideways! they are now on the level of the water; now they have disappeared. I must look again at the signal balloon aloft."

"What says the signal man?"

"Envelope the tower in mist."

"The vapour, which represents a sea cloud, is very poisonous. We must descend to the bath-room, from whence we can communicate by telegram with Count Juan?"

"What says Count Juan."

"The fleet is in sight of the island, and they blow out steam. One steamer approaches the coral reef."

After an interval of great anxiety and suspense, the telegram informs us that the vessel has sunk. The crew have been all saved by one of their own vessels: they are steaming away in a different direction.

"The danger has now passed."

After an interval of half an hour, we ascended the tower. No vessel was in sight. The balloon signalled, "All serene."

"Now, Lord Arthur, if you don't object," says Mr. Vaughan, "we will make an aerial excursion, to see how the island looks from the sea."

In one corner of the tower was a flying machine. In appearance it resembled the pictures one sees in children's books, representing a flying dragon, or a sea serpent with wings and a tail.

"That is our flying machine," says Mr. Vaughan. "I will

explain to you some day, when you are at leisure, the mechanism which moves the wings and the tail. It is done by gases, and a chemical compound, which you have not information at present to understand. We seldom use steam power. The machinery is too heavy and cumbersome, and totally unsuited for flying machines."

We seated ourselves in the centre of the flying dragon. Lamps were lighted, gases were evolved. Presently, the wings, of which there were six on each side, and the gigantic tail, began to move. We rose above the tower: at first slowly, then more quickly, and after an interval of five minutes, the motion of the wings and tail was so rapid that it could not be seen.

Our flight through the air was like that of an eagle when it swoops down upon its prey. Before I could recover from my state of astonishment, we were out at sea, two miles beyond the coral reef.

The wings ceased to flap, and the motion of the tail ceased.

"Now," says Mr. Vaughan, "look at our island. We are directly over the position where the vessel sunk."

I could have sworn, (although I have seen many coral islands), that it was a real coral reef; and I thought what folly it was in that steamer to rush upon inevitable destruction!

"Would you like to see our submarine navy?" says Mr. Vaughan.

"I should be delighted. Where is it?"

"Those chimneys, that you observed from the tower, were the look-outs from our vessels."

"Indeed! where are they gone?"

"They lie at the bottom of the sea. I will shew you one

of our vessels, which will give you an idea of what our navy could perform, in case of an invasion."

The dragon flew, and lit upon the top of one of the chimneys. We descended by a spiral staircase into a large cabin, at one end of which there was an enormous mass of machinery, unlike anything I had ever seen before.

"What can all that machinery be intended for?"

"To move the vessel under water."

"How can you live under water? That tube by which we descended could not supply a sufficient quantity of fresh air to breathe."

"The tube is merely intended for taking observations. We breathe below a purer air than those above water. Oxygen and nitrogen gases made chemically pure, and mixed in proper proportions, rise through perforations in the floor of the cabin; while the air that ascends to the roof of the cabin is carried off by a suction tube connected with a furnace. We have various means of ventilating our vessels when under water. Our mode of propelling our vessels, of rising and sinking, is extremely simple and beautiful; but we have not time to examine them at present; for I see by my watch, that it is close to sunset, at which hour Count Juan expects the pleasure of your Lordship's company at supper."

We flew back like a bird.

Scarcely had we finished our evening repast when a message arrived from Smyrna, bringing the intelligence of the illness of Donna Elvira's father, and requesting his daughter's speedy return to see him before his death.

"Lord Arthur," said Don Manuel, "I regret to say, that we must depart on the instant. My father will do all in his power to make your stay in the island agreeable."

"Much as I have enjoyed my visit;" I replied, "and anxious as I would be to prolong my sojourn in your wonderful island, I fear that I must go also. My father will receive tidings of my having been drowned at sea. I am his only son. The shock would be too great for his nerves: it would indubitably cause his death.

"In that case," says Don Manuel, "we will set you down in the island of Miranda at midnight. Our direct course to Smyrna passes over the island.

"You can find your way to the hotel on foot, and relieve the anxiety of the good people of the island, with regard to your safety. Whenever you wish to pay us another visit, you are heartily welcome; and the longer you remain with us, the more delighted we shall be."

Bidding farewell to Count Juan, we stepped into the Albatross, and shot up aloft, to gain a favourable wind.

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO THE ISLE OF MIRANDA.

"WHAT do you think, Lord Arthur, of our island? I fear you have been greatly disappointed, finding nothing but machinery in operation, where you expected to see something supernatural."

"Although very much astonished at what I saw, I was disappointed; for, in place of finding an island inhabited by scientific men, far advanced in knowledge beyond the present age, I expected to be introduced to spiritual beings belonging to another sphere, as well as to the shades of the departed."

"I am surprised, Lord Arthur, to hear you say so! Are you not aware, that the spirits of men go to their resting place, from whence they never return, except when sent on a message as angels? Can you give me a single authentic instance of the spirit of a man returning, after a certain period?"

"There are stories without number of the return of spirits, but the only one upon which we can rely, as an established fact, is that mentioned in Scripture; the raising the ghost of Samuel by the witch of Endor."

"You have selected a very unfortunate instance, to prove your assertion; for the spirit of Samuel was sent by God, not conjured up by the familiar spirits of the witch, which in itself is presumptive evidence, that the spirits brought

up from below, are not the spirits of the departed, but spirits that represent them."

"In that case, you don't believe that the spirits of the present day, that answer questions by rapping, table-tipping, &c. are really what they represent themselves to be—the spirits of the departed?"

"Stuff and nonsense: the spirits of the departed, if they could answer the questions propounded to them, would never reply in the manner these spirits answer. They have far higher intelligence than these, and moreover, they would not wait to be questioned; they would take the initiative, and impart real and profitable information."

"What spirits are they?"

"Spirits of a very inferior order. They wish to represent the spirits of departed men, merely for the pleasure of communicating with us."

"Do the spirits of men never interfere in such phenomena?"

"They may do so, but it is accidentally."

"What do you mean by accidentally?"

"When a child is born, its spirit has no active powers. All its powers are latent. These powers are developed by degrees, as the child grows, by the constant action of the external world upon the senses, *i.e.* upon the nervous system; and, therefore, upon the spirit itself with which it is united.

"When a man dies, his spirit, (from the time of apparent death to the time when decomposition of the body takes place, *i.e.* real death) remains here. During that interval of time, it can exert powers which it had acquired by being attached to matter; of which powers it is

totally ignorant, and therefore it does not exert those powers, unless urged by some strong feeling at the time of death. That exertion of power is an exception to the general rule, and explains phenomena which are called supernatural."

"I can understand that to take place for a very short period of time; but we hear of ghosts appearing, long after decomposition of the body has taken place."

"I have heard and read of many such stories. I should say, that the spirits being obliged to remain here, in place of going to their final resting-place, was intended as a punishment. The stories are generally those which refer to misers, murderers, and suicides."

"How do you explain the ghosts of living people appearing at a distance?"

"It is a fact of rare occurrence, but no less true; and the explanation is the same as that given for the ghosts of those who are apparently dead. It is a most dangerous disease."

"The Rosicrucians pretended to that knowledge?"

"We can perform that experiment, and do occasionally; but we consider it dangerous. It is necessary to take the elixir vitæ before being thrown into a state of trance, lest mortification set in."

"How does the elixir vitæ prevent it?"

"The elixir vitæ has a threefold action. First, it has a direct and powerful action upon the heart; secondly, it affects the absorbents like iodine; thirdly, it enters into combination with poisonous matter in the blood, removing thereby all the germs of disease, chronic and hereditary; which compound the absorbents take up and remove from

the system; while the veins, which have been freed from the deposits formed from year to year, are filled with pure blood pumped up into them from the heart. The result being, that wrinkles disappear, and the old assume the semblance of youth."

"I know all that already, but you have not answered my question."

"You have interrupted me. I was going on to say, that the effect of the elixir vitæ is to prevent the body undergoing decomposition after death."

"In that case the ghosts that are hovering about are the spirits of the poor old alchemists, whose bodies have never been subject to decay?"

"We don't pretend to know anything beyond natural phenomena. The conveyance of the spirits of men to their final resting-place, wherever that may be, and the phenomena attending thereon, can only be known by revelation."

"What is the elixir vitæ?"

"The elixir vitæ is an alcoholic solution of the colouring matter of gold—an elementary substance which is the basis of quartz. Its atomic number is 13. When combined with hydrogen it forms nitrogen gas."*

"The alchemists called it sulphur, from its resemblance to common sulphur; having the same colour, and subliming at nearly the same temperature."

"Some of the books represent it as being fixed in the fire. How do you explain this incongruity?"

"Its oxide, silicon, cannot be fused at a lower temperature than that produced by the oxyhydrogen blowpipe."

* Philosophical Magazine, vol. xxiii. p. 135.

"How does the elixir vitæ transmute the metals?"

"It has no effect upon the metals whatsoever. It enters, however, as an ingredient into the composition of the metallic yeast, called 'the Stone.' There are a great variety of philosopher's stones; one example will suffice. Suppose you wish to transmute silver into gold. You form a compound of gold with ingredients which undergo a process of fermentation as soon as they become liquid by heat. This compound being projected upon silver melted in a crucible, the silver ferments, and is resolved into its elements; and inasmuch as silver contains all the elements of gold, the metallic gold in the stone that has been projected attracts to itself those elements of silver which enter into the composition of gold. The result of which process is that the gold increases in weight."

"What are the mercuries of the metals?"

"The metallic bases of the earths and alkalies."

"Why cannot the metals be decomposed by the galvanic battery?"

"Because they are ternary compounds, and therefore not electrolytes."

"The Rosicrucians assert, that the Elixir Vitæ preserves a man in a state of perfect health to the age of 120 years; which they say is the limit assigned to man's life, mentioned in Scripture, which we have translated 70 years. Such being the case, I cannot understand how Raymundus Lullius could be living now in Atlantis!"

"Your remark with regard to the age of the Rosicrucians is perfectly correct, and holds good always and everywhere, except in Atlantis."

"What is there so peculiar in your floating island, that

it should be the only spot on earth where death and disease are unknown?"

"The absence of crime. We are in a position analogous, but not similar, to that of our first parents in the garden of Eden."

"I cannot see any analogy or similarity whatsoever."

"The absence of crime."

"What has that to say to your living for ever?"

"Everything; our first parents would have lived until this earth was destroyed by fire, on condition that they continued to eat the fruit of the tree of life. They were driven from the garden by an angel with a flaming sword. Why? They would have lived a long life of extreme misery. It was God's compassion for poor Adam which drove him out of the garden of Eden. Death, in place of being a curse, was a blessing."

"Why do you wish to live for ever, if you think death is a blessing?"

"We enjoy unalloyed happiness in our island home, besides which, there is an instinct implanted in the heart of man, that makes him abhor the idea of death."

"Why are the Rosicrucians of Atlantis immortal, while those elsewhere seldom pass the age of one hundred and twenty?"

"The absence of crime."

"You have told me so three times, but you have not explained."

"Adam would have lived for ever by eating the fruit of a tree; whether he lived a virtuous life or not. We can live to the age of 120 years by taking a medicine that preserves the body in health. There is a principle in operation

within us, which is not chemical, which does not depend on the circulation of the blood, in which is the life—a principle which is spiritual.

"As long as we continue to take the Elixir Vitæ in spring and autumn, and abstain from crime, so long we live."

"Has crime never been committed in Atlantis?"

"Once! Some of the adepts, who had been studying the principle of spiritual essences, had the audacity to invoke the assistance of an evil spirit! The spirit came in the shape of a pestilentious vapour. That night all the children in the island died.

"Next morning the whole island met in consultation.

"Crime had been committed. It was traced to the students of magic.

"We carried them in our balloons, and deposited them in the centre of Africa.

"Since then, there has been no death, nor disease, nor accident; we are defended from the latter by a special providence, as long as we remain in the island."

"One question more, what is the cause of the light of the sun?"

"It is an electrical phenomenon, produced by the rotation of the photosphere on a different axis from that of the body of the sun; the same explanation applies to the stars."

"What are the solar spots?"

"The smoke of volcanoes."

"Are there inhabitants in the sun?"

"For information on that subject I must refer you to Count Juan. We have now landed on the island of

Miranda. When shall we have the pleasure of receiving another visit from your Lordship?"

"I fear I cannot pay you another visit until after the death of my father. He does not like me to leave him for any length of time. Our castle, *i.e.* the ruin called Phantom Castle, has not been inhabited for centuries, being supposed to be haunted; it shall be fitted up to receive as many of your friends as wish to pay us a visit."

"Farewell, Lord Arthur. God bless you. Don't forget the signal I taught you to summon the Albatross."

CHAPTER VI.

PHANTOM CASTLE.

Lord Arthur, on his return home, lost no time in putting into thorough repair the ruins of the old castle, called Phantom Castle, which had not been inhabited since the reign of Queen Mary, having been supposed to have been haunted by the ghosts of the noble knights, who had been murdered within the walls of the palace by the soldiers of the Queen.

The woods surrounding the palace, which reached nearly to the summit of Ben Nevis, enjoyed the same uncanny reputation, nobody daring to enter them after nightfall. Scenes of murder were exhibited to their eyes. Ghosts clad in ancient armour, riding on phantom steeds, following a pack of hell-hounds, in chase of a gigantic stag darting fire from its eyes, and breathing burning sulphur from its mouth and nostrils, struck terror into the hearts of the bravest of the Scots.

The workmen in the neighbourhood were for a time induced, by the bribe of high wages, to enter the ruins; but the ghostly sights they beheld soon drove them away frantic with terror.

Lord Arthur, in despair, sent to Glasgow for workmen. The Glasgow workmen met with no opposition. No ghosts made their appearance. No noises were heard. No ringing of bells and moving of furniture. The works made rapid progress.

Lord Arthur spared no expense, his intention being to imitate what he had seen in Atlantis; so that his friends, when they returned his visit, should feel themselves at home.

With this intent, he constructed winding staircases, trap-doors, rooms ascending by machinery, and, in fine, everything that he could recollect that he had seen in Atlantis, was represented in Phantom Castle.

On the roof of the castle were built an observatory, a bath-room, and bedrooms.

A sofa was constructed to ascend and descend from the hall beneath, which was of enormous size, having been used in former times as a banqueting hall, for the entertainment of the clan.

Lord Arthur received a letter from Smyrna, informing him that his friends were travelling on the Continent, and that they would pay him a visit at Christmas, but could not fix the day of their arrival; also that they would come *when least expected.*

On Christmas eve Lord Arthur's preparations were completed; but no guests had made their appearance.

On Christmas Day Lord Arthur requested his father to accompany him to Phantom Castle, to see that everything was prepared for the Atlantidæ, should they arrive suddenly.

On entering the hall, nothing was to be seen, neither tables nor chairs; the only furniture visible was what hung suspended on the walls. Portraits, Ancient armour, Stags' horns, New Zealand spears and shields, Esquimaux boats, &c. &c.

The Earl, in the greatest surprise, addressed his son.

"My dear Arthur, is that the way you receive your friends who come to pay you a visit? Do the inhabitants of Atlantis live on air?"

"I intended, my dear father, to give you a surprise, otherwise I should have shown you the machinery of the Castle long ago. You shall see, when I touch this spring, that tables, laden with every delicacy that could be procured, shall rise through trap-doors from below. The first table shall rise at the top of the hall. There are covers laid on it for forty guests. The other tables shall rise by touching other springs. Now you shall see something that will astonish you."

He did see something that astonished him, and still more so Lord Arthur; for, on touching the spring, up rose the table and forty seats, on which sat forty men, clad in ancient armour, having their vizors closed.

"Oh!" said the Earl; "these are your friends from Atlantis, no doubt. What a strange way to make their appearance! They are heartily welcome, however, come they in whatever guise they please."

The knight who sat at the head of the table was distinguished from the others by wearing a breastplate of silver.

He stood up and raised his vizor. Both father and son started back in astonishment, when they beheld the face of their gamekeeper, who had been murdered in the wood some years before.

The others raised their vizors, and disclosed the features of the dead.

Lord Arthur was at first appalled by this unexpected sight; but soon rallying, he addressed them—

"Do you suppose that you can terrify my father and me, as you have done the superstitious peasantry, by this masquerade? I now perceive who the ghosts were that haunted these ruins and the woods for centuries."

"Lord Arthur," said the gamekeeper, "we admire your courage. No one has hitherto been able to stand this trial to their nerves. We have, *i.e.* our ancestors, held possession of the ruins and the woods for centuries by this device; held undisputed possession; and therefore, by the laws of Scotland, the castle and the woods are ours. We shall always be most happy to receive you as our guest, and we feel deeply indebted to you for the trouble and expense that you have been put to for our comfort and accommodation. The only thing that we require is, your word of honour that you will not divulge our secret."

Lord Arthur could scarcely contain his indignation while listening to this insolent speech; when the gamekeeper had concluded, he replied, "Were I to treat you as you deserve, I would let the hangman teach you how to act the part of ghosts; but as this day is Christmas Day, I will give you a free pardon, on condition that you all leave the kingdom for the Colonies without a moment's delay."

"Lord Arthur," said the gamekeeper, "we feel grateful to you for your kindness; but you forget that you are in our power, and that you have no alternative but to agree to our conditions."

"You shall see, if that be the case," replied Lord Arthur; "for the moment I pull this string, the bell on the top of the tower will summon all my tenants."

"Do you suppose, Lord Arthur, that we are such fools as to allow ourselves to be caught in a rat-trap. We know

the machinery of the tower as well as you do, having watched the workmen with great interest and curiosity. The bell has been removed. Agree to our conditions."

"Never!" said the Earl and Lord Arthur in one voice.

"In that case you are our prisoners. Lieutenant McPherson, convey the prisoners to the observatory, and at the peril of your life see that they don't escape. Let them be well taken care of; but out of those rooms they shall never stir, until they have agreed to our conditions. We invite them to dinner at six o'clock."

The ghosts in armour descend. Lord Arthur and his father, seated on the sofa, are conveyed to the observatory.

At six o'clock a knight in armour, with closed vizor, waited on the Earl and Lord Arthur to convey them to the banqueting hall.

The knights in armour are seated at table with closed vizors.

He who wore the silver corslet rose, and motioned them to the vacant seats at the top and bottom of the table.

When they were seated, he gave the word of command: "Disarm!"

The ancient armour fell with a crash on the floor, and revealed to the astonished gaze of Lord Arthur the well-known features of his friends of Atlantis!

"I told you, Lord Arthur," said Don Manuel, (for he it was who wore the silver breastplate,) "that we would come when least expected. We have kept our promise, and turned the tables upon the ghosts in armour. You gave them a free pardon, on condition that they emigrated to America. They have done so. The moment the Earl and you reached the observatory they were seized and sent

to the sea-shore, where a vessel was in readiness to convey them to South America, where we have purchased a tract of land for them to cultivate. They are not bad men: they have committed no crime except that of occupying the castle and woods, which they imagined belonged to them. We have not come here to accept your hospitality empty-handed. On that pedestal you see a case which contains gold, silver, and precious stones, which will make you the richest man on earth. You need not thank us for the gift, which to us is of as little value as the seaweed that is washed up upon your shores, or the pebbles that your children collect on the sand; but that is not all, we have brought you what to us is of infinite value."

Saying which, he drew his Toledo blade, waved it three times round his head, and called in a loud voice, "Ladies of Atlantis, appear! appear!"

The trap-door at the further end of the hall rose, and behold! seated at table, the loveliest forms that earth ever produced.

Before the Earl and Lord Arthur could recover from their surprise, Don Manuel rose for the third time, and waving round his head his Toledo blade, called in a loud voice, "Children of Atlantis, appear! appear!"

The remaining tables rose with a bang, and the children darted upwards with a scream of delight.

When the uproar had subsided, Don Manuel said:—

"We have now fulfilled our promise to return your visit, and we look forward with delight to the prospect of spending with you our first Christmas on the Continent since we formed our island home."

A clash of armour was the reply. The folding doors

opened, and sixty men armed cap-a-pie marched into the room.

"Who are you who dare to interrupt our festivities in this unceremonious manner?" inquired Don Manuel.

"Your mortal enemies," was the reply.

"Who are you?"

"Raise your vizors," spoke the deep voice of one who seemed to be their captain.

"You recognise us, Don Manuel, you thought that when you had left us in the centre of Africa, we should have fallen a prey to wild beasts, or ferocious savages. You made a wrong calculation. You forgot that our superior knowledge could enable us to subdue, and control, not only wild beasts, but still wilder men. We made our way to the coast. We travelled through different countries, meeting at stated intervals to concoct schemes for your destruction. Several times we have been on the point of wreaking our vengeance upon you, when away from your enchanted island; but some unseen power, has hitherto baffled our best laid schemes. It was our fleet, that attempted to take you by surprise, when you turned your island into a coral reef. We retreated, not from having been deceived by that foolish experiment, but from not being able to take you unawares. You are now in our power. For the last week you have been watching, concealed in these ruins, a parcel of poor half-witted poachers, while we have been watching you. You are now our prisoners. In the dungeons beneath this castle you shall all remain to the last days of your lives, never again to behold the light of the sun."

A flash of lightning was the reply to this speech, fol-

lowed by a roll of thunder. The windows of the hall fell in with an awful crash, and wheeling in circles above their heads were seen the birds of Atlantis.

"Seize the magicians," roared in a voice of thunder Count Juan.

Before they could recover from their surprise they were seized, bound, and tied to the flying birds, and away through the windows, like a flash of lightning.

Count Juan alone remained behind.

"Lord Arthur, you have been a witness of an extraordinary drama acted before your eyes. My son's imprudence had well nigh been the ruin of our colony. I foresaw, from the first moment that the magicians landed in Africa, what the result would be, and therefore I have never ceased to watch their movements, and baffle their designs. I and the birds of Atlantis have been concealed in these ruins for the last week, waiting for a favourable opportunity to strike a decisive blow. The magicians shall be confined in the caverns of the island of Dordona, and shall never trouble the world again with their sorceries. I must now bid you all farewell, having much business on hand, and wish you every happiness and enjoyment of the season."

THE VISION.

On Ascension day Lord Arthur became entranced. On recovering from his stupor, his father asked him what he had seen?

"Oh! Such a lovely vision! I was in Atlantis. All the inhabitants were assembled in the gardens in the centre of the island; expecting some extraordinary event.

Count Juan approached me, and said,

"Lord Arthur, you wished to see the inhabitants of the sun, behold they come!"

A transparent vapour, as it were white light consolidated, enveloped the island, and spread over the sea for miles. The island shook, as if from the effect of an earthquake; then rose gently from the bosom of the ocean; the white light encircling it in its folds.

Floating in this ætherial cloud were seen gigantic forms of dazzling splendour. A balmy influence filled the air, producing a feeling of ineffable delight; then was heard

the music of the spheres, the voices of the children of the sun, singing the songs of the angels.

Atlantis no longer belongs to our planet. It has been translated to Heaven."

THE END.